



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Jamey Tesler, Secretary & CEO
Jonathan L. Gulliver, Highway Administrator



December 22, 2021

Skipper Manter, Chair
West Tisbury Select Board
1059 State Road
West Tisbury, MA 02575

Dear Mr. Manter,

The MassDOT District 5 Office is responding to your letter dated on October 13, 2021, regarding a current list of concerns related to accommodation for bicycle and pedestrian traffic in West Tisbury. Below are responses to the items identified, in order of priority.

1, Crosswalks and Signage

The District will investigate the feasibility of adding crosswalks at the identified locations. Please note that crosswalks cannot be installed without ADA compliant sidewalks and curb ramps on both sides of a roadway.

2. Speed Limit Reduction

The posted speed limits on State Highway in West Tisbury are established through Special Speed Regulation No. 683. Regulatory speed limits cannot be altered through an administrative process, an engineering study in compliance with federal traffic engineering standard must be conducted.

Per the MassDOT *Procedures for Speed Zoning on State Highways and Municipal Roadways* "...speed limits on streets and highways should be set at a rate that is in the best interest of the public's right to use a roadway in a reasonable and proper manner. The ideal speed limit maintains safe operating speeds for all road users, is acceptable to the prudent driver, and is enforceable by police. ...However, modifying a speed limit without making other changes will likely have little effect on reducing speeds. To effectively reduce vehicle speeds, setting speed limits should be included only as a part of a broader strategy that includes geometric changes to the road and other educational and enforcement components."

Additional information on the requested locations for the revision of speed limits is as follow.

The intersection of State Road and Scotchman's Lane and Panhandle Road is not a high crash location. The intersection is averaging 1 reported crash per year, with no reported crashes occurring in 2021. There have been no reported pedestrian or bicycle related crashes at this intersection since 2002.

The characteristics of the section of South Road between the existing 25 MPH speed zone and the Chilmark town line are fundamentally different than conditions in the West Tisbury village center, with fewer driveways and side streets spaced farther apart. MassDOT has not received any official requests from the Town of Chilmark regarding the posted speed limit on South Road.

The section of State Road between Lambert's Cove Road and the Mill Brook Bridge has two distinct areas of commercial land uses, and the crash patterns reflect this activity. The District will evaluate this section of State Road to determine if changes are warranted.

The section of Edgartown Road between the existing 25 MPH speed zone and New Lane has very few driveways and is bordered by undeveloped land to the south. The roadway characteristics do not justify altering the existing 25 MPH speed zone.

MassDOT will evaluate the roadway width at the Mill Bridge to see if it meets the requirements for narrow bridge signs. There is an existing Narrow Bridge sign in advance of the bridge in the southbound direction and an existing curve warning sign in advance of the bridge in the northbound direction. These two signs should display the same warning message. If the roadway width on the bridge exceeds the width required for Narrow Bridge signs, the existing sign will be replaced with a curve warning sign. There are also existing object markers at the beginning of the bridge guard rail in each direction.

3. Road Surfaces

MassDOT will evaluate the roadway width at the Mill Bridge to see if it meets the requirements for narrow bridge signs. There is an existing Narrow Bridge sign in advance of the bridge in the southbound direction and an existing curve warning sign in advance of the bridge in the northbound direction. These two signs should display the same warning message. If the roadway width on the bridge exceeds the width required for Narrow Bridge signs, the existing sign will be replaced with a curve warning sign. There are also existing object markers at the beginning of the bridge guard rail in each direction to provide motorists with additional warning of the roadway condition.

The District 5 Office has been in contact with the Martha's Vineyard Commission regarding local concerns on the bridge. District personnel will schedule a site visit in early 2022. The Town's concern of keeping with the rural nature, the need for the shared use path, and necessary signage will be discussed at that time.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the attention of the District 5 Office. If you have any questions regarding the subject matter, please contact Bill Travers, District Operations Engineer, at 857-368-5020, or by email at Bill.Travers@dot.state.ma.us.

Sincerely,

Mary-Joe Perry

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Mary-Joe Perry
District 5 Highway Director

KAS/WDT/
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Cc: MJP, WDT, MEB, PRH, KLC
West Tisbury Complete Streets Committee
Honorable Julian Cyr, State Senator
Honorable Dylan Fernandes, State Representative